

SUNLIGHT FOR CLOUDY DAYS

NO. 3345

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1913
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT MENTONE

“But I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me.”
Psalm 40:17

IT is not everybody who would like to apply to himself the first part of the text. Perhaps we most of us accept it because it happens to be Scriptural language and yet we might not spontaneously say of ourselves, “I am poor and needy.” Some would even wish us to believe the very opposite, for if I read their hearts aright, they say, “I am not poor, nor needy.”

They have enough of this world’s goods, and as for spiritual matters, they are strong and self-reliant. All this comes of vainglory and in the long run will end in vanity and vexation of spirit—for if a man can do without God, it is certain that God can do without him—and the day will come when God *will* do without him, according to His Word, “I will ease me of mine adversaries.”

He who has tried throughout life to do without God will inherit remorse forever and ever. It is well to begin, continue, and end in this life with God’s favor, that we may enjoy it world without end. I therefore trust that none among you would wish to say, “I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing,” for that would be tantamount to a proud resolve to do without God, and it must end in your eternal ruin.

There are some who cry, “I am poor and needy, woe is me that I should be so. But the Lord does not think of me. I have looked up to heaven, but no eye of pity looks down upon me in the depth of my misery.” Many a wretched mind, many a bereaved spirit, many a downcast heart has cried, “The Lord has forgotten me. He counts the number of the stars and calls them by their names, but as for me, I am too little, too insignificant, too obscure—I cannot believe that God thinks upon me.”

Dear friend, I hope you will be converted from this unbelief. I pray that you may not only be able to join in one half of my text by saying, “I am poor and needy,” but that you may humbly unite in the second declaration, “Yet the LORD thinketh upon me.” Despite your insignificance and unworthiness, you may yet learn that the Lord has thoughts of love towards you and is causing all things to work together for your external, internal, and eternal good.

Do not let it surprise you that one of old should say, “I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me,” for God has often thought of poor and needy persons. Look at Joseph when he was in prison and the iron entered into his soul—his reputation was gone, and he was reproached, and even punished unjustly, yet we read that the Lord was with Joseph, and in due time He brought him out and set him on the throne of Egypt.

So Ruth, the Moabitess, came penniless to Israel’s land, and she went to glean among the sheaves as a poor and needy peasant woman. But the Lord was thinking upon her, and so provided for her that she rose to an honorable estate, and her name is written among the progenitors of our Lord Jesus.

To give you a more modern instance—the apostles were poor fishermen with their little boats and well-worn nets, upon the Lake of Galilee—yet the Lord looked upon them—unlearned and ignorant men as they were, and made them to be the pioneers of His kingdom. Never mind how poor and needy you are, you may yet be heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

“Alas!” you say, “my trouble is not a poverty of gold and silver, but I am poor as to anything like goodness in the sight of God. I feel so guilty and so far from being what I ought to be.” Yet the Lord has thought oftentimes of such people as you are. Look at the blessed Master sitting on the well at Sychar,

talking with that wanton woman, who had had five husbands, and he whom she then had was not her husband. She was a woman whom none would honor, but the blessed Savior thought upon her.

Remember, too, the thief dying upon the cross next to the Redeemer, with all his sins red upon him, for he had been a robber and probably a murderer, too. His prayer, “Lord, remember me,” touched the heart of Jesus and “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise” was the gracious response. The Lord thought on him, and yet there was never one more poor and needy than he.

There, too, was Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the church of God. But the Merciful One in heaven, who saw his sin, thought on him with love and said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?” Poverty of all merit, and need of all grace, do not prevent the Lord from thinking upon men. Is not this fact as clear as the sun in the heavens? However spiritually poor you may be, you may yet partake of the riches of His grace, and so become rich in faith—indeed, none but consciously needy ones ever obtain the privilege of saying, “Yet the LORD thinketh upon me.”

I was troubled, when I was asking the Lord, with the notion that I was so utterly insignificant that the Lord would never notice *me*. There is no reason for such a fear, since the Lord has thought upon very obscure people. Think of the Syro-Phoenician woman’s daughter. What was her name? Do you know what sort of a girl she was? Can you tell her after-history? She is quite unknown to fame, yet the Lord thought upon her and healed her.

That little daughter of Jairus, a child of twelve years of age, what could she do? Did she become a distinguished woman? What lifework did she perform? She makes no figure in history, yet the Lord thought upon her, and even restored her from the dead. The widow’s son, who was being carried out of the city of Nain, what did he achieve? What post of honor did he occupy? What lofty path did he pursue? We know nothing of him except that the Lord thought upon him.

The most of the persons whom the Lord Jesus thought upon in the days of His flesh were unknown to fame, and for my part, I judge that the happiest persons are those who pass through life unknown of men, but known of God. During the French Revolution, a man of great influence escaped the guillotine, and when asked how it was, he replied, “I made myself of no reputation and kept silence.” Those who are content to follow the cool sequestered vale of life are often happier than those who climb the high places of the earth.

Do not, therefore think that your being in the background is any hindrance to the Lord’s thinking upon you. He cares nothing about the blare of trumpets or the blaze of fame, but the Lord looks upon the meek and lowly, and finds out the men that are of a broken heart and of a contrite spirit, and that tremble at His Word, and with these He deigns to dwell. May we be found among them!

At this time my desire is to do four things, upon each of which I would speak briefly. By the words of the text I desire, first, *to help your faith* to remember that if you are poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon you. Then I long *to enlarge your hope*. Thirdly, *to inflame your love*, and fourthly, *to direct your life*. May God the Holy Ghost perform all these things for us! First, let me—

I. HELP YOUR FAITH.

You say to yourself, “I cannot understand how God should think of me.” Why not? “Because I am so little.” Let me ask you if there is anything in the world which is not little to God? You say, “There is the world itself,” and I answer, that the earth which we think so large, is no more to God than a single grain of dust. The solar system, and all the other systems that make up the creation of God, are as nothing to the infinite JEHOVAH.

So great is the universe that the most elevated conception of the most enlarged mind has never compassed more than a fragment of it—yet God is infinitely beyond the inconceivable whole of created existence! A man must always be really greater than his own works and certainly God must be infinitely greater than all that He has ever made.

Now, if you think it difficult that God should think upon the little, *what else should God think upon?* You reply that you expect Him to think of the great ones of the earth. Alas! the most of them think very little of Him—the Lord has had the least worthy treatment from those who are ranked as rich and

honorable. When we reach heaven, we shall find few kings and princes, few of the learned and lauded—"God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith"—so says the inspired apostle.

Again, if it should seem difficult to you for God to think upon the poor and needy, I invite you to answer the question, "Who need God's thoughts most?" On the field of battle, after the fight, if a surgeon should be there to attend to the wounded, where will he go first? Of course, he will go to those whose gaping wounds have almost opened the gates of death for them, and the slightly wounded he will leave till he has more time.

The Lord will not look upon us according to our deservings, for if He did, He would destroy us all. But He will look upon us in proportion to our necessities. Our urgent needs move His mercy and He will go first to those who require Him most. Do you need His grace more than anyone else? Then He will hasten at once to you.

If I see a physician's carriage hurrying down the street, I feel morally certain that he is not driving to my door, for I am not dangerously ill. But if I know of one who has fallen in a fit, or has been badly injured by an accident, I conclude that he is going to him. When the angel of mercy is made to fly very swiftly, be you sure that he is speeding to one who is in urgent need of grace.

Remember, too, that *God has always dealt with men from that point of view*. When God made His *election* of men, or ever the earth was, He chose them as fallen and undeserving, that He might lift them up to the praise of the glory of His grace. His choice of men was never guided by anything good that He saw in them. As says the apostle Paul, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth."

The decree still stands, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." The Lord of grace asks in His sovereignty, "Shall I not do as I will with my own?" God views men as all guilty, and finding them guilty, He yet chooses unto Himself a people in whom His grace shall be resplendent. Therefore do not conclude that He will pass you by because you are poor and needy.

Moreover, the *redemption* of Christ obviously views us as fallen and guilty. Did He lay down His life to redeem those who were not captives? Did He pour out His blood to cleanse those who were already clean? If we had not needed a great salvation, would the Darling of heaven have stooped to the death of the cross that we might be saved? They who think that sinners cannot be saved, or that men can be saved by any other means than by true faith in Jesus, make a superfluity of the death of Christ—and this is a blasphemy atrocious to the last degree.

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save"—*the righteous?*—oh no, but "to save sinners, even the chief." Stagger not at the grace of God to your own hurt, but say, "Though I be spiritually poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me."

Furthermore, the *gift of God the Holy Spirit* proves that God regards us as poor and needy. If we were strong and full of all spiritual forces, we would not have needed the Spirit of God to quicken and regenerate us, and we should not have needed that Spirit to abide in us as our Teacher and Helper. Why, brethren, you cannot even pray without the Spirit of God. The Spirit is given to help your infirmity in prayer, because that infirmity most surely exists. The gift of the Spirit of God to men is a proof that God looks upon them as being poor and needy in spiritual things.

Now, if you feel that you cannot pray, that you cannot repent, that you cannot believe, that you cannot do anything that is good, in your own strength, fret not about it, but fly to the Strong for strength. Say, "I am poor and needy, but the gift of the Holy Spirit is an evidence that the LORD thinketh upon me."

Let me further say, to help your faith, that though you say you are very poor and spiritually needy, you are not alone in this, for *so are all God's saints*, and the brighter the saints the more they feel their

own poverty and need. Certain boasters talk “exceeding proud” about their religious attainments. But the more they glory, the more vain is their glory. True saints are humble.

In a company where certain people were displaying their spiritual attainments, it was noticed that one devout person remained silent, and a talkative man turned to him, and asked, “Have you no sanctification?” He replied, “I never had any to boast of, and I hope I never shall have.” The more high in grace, the more low in self-esteem.

Ask the man who has the most holiness what he thinks of himself and he will be the first to lament that he has not yet reached the point which he desires. We are like those old-fashioned wine glasses which had no foot to them, so that they could not stand upon the table, but must be held in the hand. When Jesus has us in His hand, we can be filled with the water of life—but out of His hand, we cannot hold a drop, nor even stand.

We are nothing at all without our All-in-all. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” said one. “Without me ye can do nothing,” is the true word of Christ to every branch of the living Vine. Now, if all God’s saints say that they are nobodies, do not despair because you are a nobody. If they all confess that they can do nothing without Christ, do not you despond because you also can do nothing without Him.

Do you reply, “I wish I had a greater sense of spiritual riches”? If you had more faith in Christ, it would be well, but to have any confidence in your own experience would do you mischief.

Let me here relate a story which may cheer those who feel themselves to be so guilty that the Lord will not think upon them. Upon those who feel their guilt the Lord looks. A Savior is on the lookout for sinners quite as much as sinners are on the lookout for a Savior.

I have heard that a great English prince on one occasion went to visit a famous king of Spain. The prince was taken down to the galleys, to see the men who were chained to the oars and doomed to be slaves for life. The king of Spain promised, in honor of the prince’s visit, that he would set free any one of these men that the prince might choose.

So the prince went to one prisoner and said, “My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you in this plight, how came you here?” “Ah! sire,” he answered, “false witnesses gave evidence against me. I am suffering wrongfully.” “Indeed!” said the prince and passed on to the next man. “My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you here, how did it happen?” “Sire, I certainly did wrong, but not to any great extent. I ought not to be here.” “Indeed!” said the prince, and he went on to others who told him similar tales.

At last he came to one prisoner, who said, “Sire, I am often thankful that I am here, for I am sorry to own that if I had received my due I should have been executed. I am certainly guilty of all that was laid to my charge and my severest punishment is just.” The prince replied wittily to him, “It is a pity that such a guilty wretch as you are should be chained among these innocent men and therefore I will set you free.”

You smile, and well you may. How you will smile if Jesus does the same for you! Assuredly this is the manner of Him—He passes by those who think highly of themselves, and looks upon those who are self-condemned, and plead guilty before God. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. When we have nothing to pay, He frankly forgives the debt. He thinks upon the poor and needy.

I ask you to look at the text again, by way of—

II. ENLARGEMENT OF YOUR HOPE.

“I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me.” It is a great thing that God should think upon us. Is it certainly true that the great heart of God is thinking upon me, an inconsiderable atom of existence? What then? It is enough to make the bells of our hearts ring for joy. Let us listen again to the silver note of the text, “The Lord thinketh *upon me*.”

The Lord thinks as much of one of His people as if there were nobody else for Him to think upon. Poor needy one, the LORD thinketh upon you as intensely as if you were the only being now existing. The Lord is able to concentrate His whole mind upon any one point without dividing that mind—He has

such an infinite capacity that each one of us may be the center of God's thoughts—and yet He will not be forgetting any other beloved one. God is a Being whose center is everywhere, but His circumference is nowhere. "The Lord thinketh upon me."

Is it not beautiful to notice how God thought of the first man whom He placed on this earth? He did not make man till He had prepared everything for his happiness. The Lord would not rest until He had finished His work, until He had lighted up the heavens, and created all manner of comforts and conveniences for His child. Not till He had even prepared the birds to sing to him and the flowers to breathe their perfume upon him, did God create man.

Why did God rest on the seventh day? Because He had thought of all that man wanted and had made all things good for Him. Our Lord Jesus never rested till He had finished the work that His Father gave Him to do, which work was all for us—and the great providence of God will never rest till all the chosen of God are brought safely home to heaven. Thus you see how God thinks upon us.

Remember also that God's thoughts are not dumb thoughts, they break out into words, and this precious Bible contains the expression of those thoughts of love. This priceless Book is a love letter from our Father who is in heaven. Read each line as if it were freshly written and it will make you say, "I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me, and here are His thoughts."

Nor does the Lord rest in words. I have heard of a waiter who said to a guest, "I hope you will remember me, sir." "Yes," replied the other, "I shall never forget your bad behavior." It would be well for us if our fellow men would not think of us when we have done them wrong, but God's thoughts of us are ever kind and forgiving. His thoughts are practical and produce deeds of kindness. He thinks to give and forgive, to save and succor, to cheer and cherish.

The Lord is thinking what He will give you, what He will make of you, and what mansion in heaven He will appoint for you. If He has thought upon you, He always will think upon you, for the Lord never changes. Our God, in whom we trust, is not fickle. He is not thoughtful of us today and forgetful of us tomorrow. If you should live to be as old as Methuselah, the promises of God will never wear out—and if all the troubles that ever fell upon humanity should pounce upon you, God's strength will be put forth to sustain you and to bear you to a triumphant close.

Oh, the joy of knowing that God thinks upon us! It is better to have God thinking upon us than to have all the kings of earth and all the angels of heaven thinking upon us. Thirdly, and very briefly—

III. LET THIS INFLAME YOUR LOVE.

"I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me." Dear friends, think much of God, since He thinks much of you. Let your hearts go out towards *Him* on whose heart your name is written. It ought to be impossible for a Christian to wander among these olive groves without saying, "Beneath such trees as these my Savior sweat great drops of blood."

We ought not to sit on the beach without thinking, "The Lord has cast my sins into the depths of the sea." As the palm tree lifts itself to heaven, without an earthward branch, so send all your thoughts upward. As the vine, though sharply pruned, yields its cluster, so bear fruit unto your Lord. Upon yonder sea the apostle of the Gentiles was tossed and wrecked for love of Jesus—yield to that same Lord your whole hearts as you think upon His thoughts of you.

Everything about this place should make us think of our Lord, for in many respects it is the counterpart of "thy land O Immanuel!" This day God is thinking upon you, this day think upon God. Christ in heaven is preparing heaven for us, let us be preparing a place on earth for Him.

I have often wondered what is meant by our Lord's preparing a place for us, since heaven is prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. I suppose heaven was not fully fit for us till Jesus went there, and the very going there of our Well-Beloved has prepared heaven for redeemed men and women to live in it in His own sweet society. Jesus is watching in heaven for the time when we shall come home and He is praying for that homecoming—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am."

Do you not receive frequent tokens that the Lord Jesus is thinking upon you? Special mercies in answer to prayer, sweet visits of love—do not these cheer your heart? Our sacred joys, which come from Jesus, are like those boxes of flowers that we send to our friends who are freezing in the cold at this time in England. They know that we remember them as they look upon every rosebud, and violet, and anemone, that comes to them through the post.

Our heavenly Father sends us many such tokens of His loving remembrance while we are hearing the Gospel, or enjoying the Lord's Supper, or occupied in our private prayers and meditations. "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them!"

To close, let me use this text to—

IV. DIRECT YOUR CONDUCT.

"I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me." The whole of what I say shall go into this one thought—if God thinks upon you, leave off all anxious and carking care about yourself. I do not suppose there is any place in the world that has more care and anxiety in it than this little town, which nestles beneath the mountains and suns itself by the sea.

Many of you come here with dear ones who are pining away before your eyes or you are alarmed about your own health. Do not trouble yourselves unduly, for if you do so, you cannot remove sickness thereby, but you may even increase it. If I could do any good by worrying, I would worry away to my heart's content. But as it is useless, I find it best to let it alone.

They tell me that if a man were to fall into the sea, he would float if he would remain quiet, but because he struggles he sinks. I am sure it is so when we are in affliction. Fretfulness results in weakening us, in hiding from us wise methods of relief, and in general, in doubling our pains. It is folly to kick against the pricks. It is wisdom to kiss the rod. Trust more and fear less.

If you have trusted your soul with Christ, can you not trust Him with everything else? Can you not trust Him with your sick child, or your sick husband, with your wealth, with your business, with your life? "Oh," says one, "I hardly like to do that. It is almost presumption to take our minor cares to the great Lord." But in so doing you will prove the truthfulness of your faith!

I heard of a man who was walking along the high road, with a pack on his back. He was growing weary and was, therefore glad when a gentleman came along in a chaise and asked him to take a seat with him. The gentleman noticed that he kept his pack strapped to his shoulders, and so he said, "Why do you not put your pack down?" "Why, sir," said the traveler, "I did not venture to impose. It was very kind of you to take *me* up, and I could not expect you to carry my pack as well." "Why," said his friend, "do you not see that whether your pack is on your back, or off your back, I have to carry it?"

My hearer, it is so with your trouble. Whether you care, or do not care, it is the Lord who must care for you. "But my daily trouble seems too mean a thing to bring before the Lord in prayer." Then I fear you forgot my text or fail to see the spirit which dictated it—God thinks upon the poor and needy—and all the concerns of the poor and needy are, like themselves, poor affairs.

Why do you weary yourself with care when God cares for you? If I were afraid of burglars and kept a watchman to guard my house at night, I certainly should not sit up all night myself. The Lord is your keeper, why are you fearful? It is infinitely better that you should be able to say, "The Lord thinketh upon me," than that you should have all power, and wisdom, and wealth in your own hands. I charge you, then, to rest in the Lord and fret no longer.

First, trust your Lord with your souls and then trust Him with everything else. First, surrender yourself to His love, to be saved by His infinite compassion, and then bring all your burdens, and cares, and troubles, and lay them down at His dear feet, and go and live a happy, joyful life, saying, as I will say, and close—

*"All that remains for me,
Is but to love and sing;
And wait until the angels come,
To bear me to my King."*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 8:1-31

Verse 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

To my mind, one of the sweetest words of that verse is that little word *now*. There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation—at this very moment. Walking under the power of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus, there is, therefore, now no condemnation to believers. It is a logical conclusion, too, from something that went before. You and I are not absolved from sin apart from the truth, but there is a great truth at the back of it which necessitates it. “There is, *therefore*, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

2. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Sin and death cannot govern me—cannot condemn me—cannot destroy me. Another law has come in. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has brought me into another kingdom wherein I cannot be affected, so as to condemn me, by the law of sin and death.

3-4. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The law of God was a good law, a just and holy law. It was weak, not in itself, for, verily, if righteousness could have been by any law, it would have been by the law of God. But it was weak through our flesh. We could not keep it. We could not fulfill the conditions of life laid down under it. Therefore, what the law could not do, God has now done for us. He has found a way of making us righteous through the righteousness of His own dear Son, whom He has sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. He has found out a way of condemning sin, without condemning us. He condemned sin in the flesh, but we escaped.

And He has found a way of making us practically righteous, too, through the abundance of His grace, enabling us to walk no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Blessed be God for this, for when we had broken His law, He might justly have left us to take the consequences, but He has stepped aside—He has gone beyond all that might have been expected of Him and brought in a law by which a remedy is applied to all our ills. Glory be to His name!

5. *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*

They live to eat and drink. They live for self-aggrandizement. They live for the world and its pleasures alone. It is according to their nature. Everything acts according to its nature. The wolf devours—the sheep patiently feeds. They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.

5. *But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

God has given us, then, the Spirit to dwell in us, and now I trust we can say that we desire holiness, and righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, for these things are the things of the Spirit.

6-7. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

It is so deeply vitiated, so thoroughly depraved, that so long as the fleshly mind exists, it will be in rebellion against God. “Ye must be born again,” for that which is born of the flesh is flesh and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Unless we are renewed, then, by the Spirit of God, we never shall be subject to the law of God—neither, indeed, can we be.

8-9. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Christ does not own any that are not indwelt by His Spirit. They may wear the Christian name. They may perform some acts which look like Christian acts—but all this avails nothing. You must have the

Spirit of God within you or else you are none of His. And what a thing it is to be “none of his.” “Verily,” says Christ, “I never knew you.” “But Lord, we ate and drank with thee: thou didst preach in our streets.” But He says, “I never knew you.” They are none of His. Oh! dear friends, the highest point to which human nature can reach of itself falls short of being in Christ. There must be the Spirit of God dwelling in us or else we are none of His.

10. *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin;*

Therefore, it suffers disease and pain, for the soul is regenerated, but not the body. If I may so speak, the regeneration of the body happens at the resurrection. It is then that it will receive its full share of the blessed work of Christ. “The body is dead because of sin.”

10-11. *But the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

So there is a complete deliverance provided for body, soul, and spirit. As Moses said to Pharaoh when he agreed to let the people of Israel go, but said that they must leave behind their flocks, “Not a hoof shall be left behind,” so no particle of our real manhood shall be left under the thralldom of sin and death. The soul is already emancipated, and the body shall be, by the Spirit which dwells in you.

12. *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

For we owe the flesh nothing by way of gratitude or service. The flesh has dragged us down. The flesh has ruined us. We owe it nothing, except mastery of it. We are not debtors to it, to live after it.

13. *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:*

It will die, and so will you, who make it your master.

13. *But if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

“Mortify,” kill, put to death.

14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

There may be a great many weaknesses and infirmities about them, but if they follow the divine leadership of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15. *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.*

Is this true of you? “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Dear friends, hearing these words, can you respond to them? Are they true of you?

16. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Many of you make a profession of being the children of God. Can your own spirit say that it is true? And is there, in addition to this, the witness of the Spirit within you that it is true? If not, unless there is a witness to our testimony, it avails nothing. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.” And if He chooses to put Himself on a level, as it were, with the rest of humanity in that respect, we cannot expect that our witness will stand for ought if it stands alone. No, there must be the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

17. *And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;*

Oh that *if*—“if children.” There are some that get over all that. They believe in a universal fatherhood—which is not worth the words in which they describe it. This is a different fatherhood altogether.

17. *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Oh! this blessed co-partnership—this fellowship. Joint-heirs with Christ. Taking part in the whole heritage—as well the heritage of suffering as the heritage of glory. “It shall bruise thy heel, but thou shalt bruise his head.” There is to be the heel-bruising for the Christ, as well as for us, but there is to be the head-crushing of sin and Satan for Him and for us, too.

18. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Glory in us! Only think of that! You know the revelation that is in the Book—but how grand will be the revelation that is in the man! “The glory which shall be revealed in us.” We shall be full of glory. And a part of God’s glory, which otherwise must have lain concealed, will be revealed in His people to His own praise forever and ever—but also to our own eternal joy.

19. *For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

There is something that the whole creation is waiting for and it cannot come till God’s children are manifested—till the glory is revealed in them.

20-22. *For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travaileth in pain together until now.*

“The whole creation.” It is the same word all through—so I have put the same word. The whole world is in its pangs and birth throes, and there can never come its complete deliverance into the new heavens and the new earth, except there shall also be the manifestation of the children of God, and their deliverance from all that now hampers and hinders the divine life that is within them.

23. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

This is what we are looking for. Our manhood is not all soul—it is body, too. And here, as yet, this poor body seems to lie outside the gate, like Lazarus, while the soul rejoices in God. But its time of glorifying is coming. The trumpet of the archangel shall proclaim it.

24. *For we are saved by hope:*

As yet we are saved by hope.

24-26. *But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doeth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.*

That is a grand thing. We have got the first fruits of the Spirit to be the pledge of all the glorious harvest. The very fact that the Spirit dwells in us is the conclusive proof that our bodies shall be raised from the dead. Meanwhile, the Spirit of God is helping us, as we groan and labor, towards the complete perfection. “The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.”

27. *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Nor is it only the Holy Spirit who is thus helping us onward towards the grand finale.

28-29. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

And you know that He is the firstborn in this sense—not only as the greatest, but that as the first-begotten from among the dead, He has risen from the dead. He has risen from the dead and in this He leads the way for us all. “That he might be the first-born among many brethren.”

30. *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

No slips, no gaps or chasms, by the way. The foreknown are predestinated. The predestinated are the called. The called are justified. The justified are glorified.

31. *What shall we then say to these things?*

Shall we succumb under the sufferings of the body? Shall we yield to doubt because of all our heavy feelings and the dullness that comes of the flesh? By no manner of means.

31. *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

We can get through all these difficulties if God be with us.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.